

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment claims 1, 7 and 8 are amended, and new claims 10-18 are added. The drawings have been amended. No new matter is added.

Drawings

The Examiner has requested corrected drawings. In response to the objection, Applicants have submitted corrected formal drawings herewith. Approval of the drawings is respectfully requested.

Section §112, Second Paragraph, Rejection

The Office Action rejects claims 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for containing asserted informalities. Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is overcome with the above amendments to claims 7-8, in which the amendments suggested by the Examiner are made. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

Section §102 and §103 Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kataoka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,307,145), with evidence of physical properties provided by "Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)" from The Loctite Design Guide for Bonding Plastics, Volume 2 (pp. 50-51) and "Common Shrinkage Values" from GE Polymerland. Somewhat similarly, the Office Action also rejects claims 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Kataoka et al., with evidence of physical properties provided by "Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)" from The Loctite Design Guide for Bonding Plastics, Volume 2 (pp. 50-51). The Office Action also rejects claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Kataoka et al. in view of Komori et al. (EP 0 829 909 A2). The Office Action also rejects claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Komori et al. in view of Yamada et al. (EP 0 860 886 A2). Somewhat similarly, the Office Action rejects claims 2 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Komori et al. in view of Yamada et al. and further in view of asserted "Admissions of prior art made in the instant specification."

The present claims require, *inter alia*, a "solar cell module comprising a front surface protecting layer, a rear surface protecting layer, and solar cells and a resin film sealed within sealing resin between the front surface protecting layer and the rear surface protecting layer...wherein the resin film is formed to overlay an area including an array of the solar cells" (excerpt of claim 1).

The Office Action notes that Kataoka et al. disclose that "[p]hotovoltaic elements produced by the [Kataoka et al.] techniques are connected in series or parallel, depending upon desired voltage or electric current. Another arrangement may be such

that photovoltaic elements are integrated on an insulated substrate to achieve desired voltage or current" (column 10, lines 50-54). The Office Action thus asserts that resin film 108 would cover an area including an array of solar cell elements.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of Kataoka et al. since, in such a configuration, the resin film 108 for each of the solar cell elements would cover only an area including one solar cell element, and thus not cover an area including an array of solar cell elements. In particular, it is noted that Kataoka et al. disclose forming a surface protecting layer by applying a certain solution to the surface of a photovoltaic element (see column 13, lines 1-15).

However, in order to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended the claims to make even more clear that the resin film of the present invention covers an area of an array of solar cell elements. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to further define that "the resin film is formed so as to cover an area as large as or larger than the area of the array of the solar cells."

Regarding the disclosure of Komori et al., Applicants understand that in Komori et al. it is disclosed that "a solar cell block including 5 solar cells connected in series was prepared...and was formulated in a laminate solar cell module" (see Komori et al. page 9, lines 19-23).

The Office Action asserts that the "cell block 401" of Figure 4B of Komori et al. has an "inorganic fibrous sheet 402" and "an insulating resin film 407" correspond to the "resin film" of the present claims.

However, Applicants respectfully note that the Komori et al. inorganic fibrous sheet 402 is not moisture proof. In particular, Applicants respectfully note that Komori

et al. disclose that moisture can intrude along the fiber (see page 3, line 41). Thus, claim 1 has also been amended to define the resin film as being "moisture-proof."

Applicants further note that Komori et al. do not appear to show "an insulating resin film 407." Komori et al. do mention an "integrated laminate film 407" (page 10, line 9). However, such a film 407 would not be located "between the solar cells and the front surface protecting layer" as required in the present claims.

Finally, Applicants note that none of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)" from The Loctite Design Guide for Bonding Plastics, Volume 2 (pp. 50-51), "Common Shrinkage Values" from GE Polymerland, or the asserted "Admissions of prior art made in the instant specification" disclose a resin film as defined in our proposed amended claims.

For at least the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the above-listed rejections under §102(e) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below to schedule a personal or telephone interview to discuss any remaining issues.

Should this response not be considered timely filed, Applicants petition for any necessary extension of time. Please charge any fees for such a petition and/or charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referencing Attorney Docket No. 107336-00025.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert K. Carpenter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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